

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 6, 2004
MILLENNIUM SCHOOL, CONFERENCE ROOM A
7:15 A.M.**

Members Present: Christopher A. Romeo, Douglas Deschenes, Andrea Peraner-Sweet, Jim Silva, Diane Holmes, Scott Hazleton, Elaine Nickerson, Carl Lyman, Ann Eno, Bruce Caldwell, Lauren Coffey

Absent: Mary Trubey

Non voting members present: Jennifer Burke

Guests: Lawrence Order & Sam Frank, Westford Residents

Announcements:

Mr. Lyman announced that he had helped Ms. Pude with the Brookside Mill lottery on 9/28. He stated that Ms. Pude should be commended for a job well done. The winner was a single mom with 3 boys. He noted that there is a need for three bedrooms in town. He asked that we keep that in mind when reviewing projects.

Ms. Nickerson talked with the Committee about Ch. 40R. She encouraged the group to read the handout about creating smart growth zoning with incentives for affordable housing. She indicated that the density is high, but there is a 100% reimbursement for school children. Mr. Romeo and Ms. Peraner-Sweet noted that the report was authored by Ted Carmen and that Westford was the model for the report. There was some concern that the legislation is not in place yet. Ms. Nickerson will look into it further.

Minutes:

On a motion by Chris Romeo, seconded by Ann Eno, the Committee voted 10-0-1 Elaine Nickerson abstaining to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2004 meeting as written.

AHTF:

Ms. Burke asked the Committee how they wanted to proceed with Town Counsel's recommendations. Mr. Romeo said that he would like to do some of his own research before moving forward.

Beaverbrook Road:

Mr. Romeo and Ms. Peraner-Sweet attended the land court hearing for this parcel. They were advised by counsel; that the recorder was sympathetic to homeowners. They presented all the work done by Town staff and Boards and Committees regarding affordable housing and special needs housing. Mr. Romeo thanked Mr. Hazleton for reminding him that DMH had visited the site. He felt that looked good in the eyes of the court. There is a feeling that the recorder may

have been swayed. The true intent of the buyer was made known. The recorder has taken it under advisement.

Mr. Deschenes asked if there was a way to circumvent Mr. Lewis. Committee members have heard that he will not finance an appeal. It may be worth appealing if the Town loses to discuss settlement with the Labbes directly. Mr. Romeo and Mr. Silva will ask the BOS for an executive session to discuss pending litigation.

Hicks Project:

Ms. Coffey discussed the site visit taken by the subcommittee. In her opinion it is a great parcel and an opportunity to increase density. There is a lack of abutters on the access roads. Ms. Holmes indicated that she also had a positive impression. The site lends itself to different types of development. The next step will be a brainstorming session.

Mr. Frank indicated his preference to have a ZBA member on this subcommittee. Ms. Burke noted her concern for the legality in that the ZBA is the review board and member should not be influencing projects in this manner in order to avoid an appearance of predetermined decisions. The Committee disagreed and felt that if a ZBA member did not vote they would be allowed to contribute to the subcommittee.

Larry Order:

Mr. Order told the Committee that he has been approached by developers with come cash and an interest to build in Westford. He would prefer to help with the shortage of affordable housing. He has an idea to use town owned land and put prefab single family units on this land with a high percentage of affordable units. He wondered how to get the ball rolling. He would like the “community” to work together in making all the units affordable.

Ms. Holmes indicated that this was a good time in that the LAOC had presented their report to the BOS with ideas on different types of affordable housing on town owned land. The Committee recommended that Mr. Order obtain LAOC’s report and speak with Norman Khumalo to get some guidance.

New 40B:

Mr. Deschenes presented a piece of property off Makepeace Road. It is 8-10 acres and the applicant would like to propose 28 single-family units. Most of the land is flat there is a gentle slope. There seems to be good soils, but they expect a lot of rock. They are working with Tyngsboro to supply water and possibly sewer to the project. If sewer is not possible they will do a community system similar to Hitching Post Greens.

The home will be 3 bedrooms (1200-1600 square feet). Market rate units would run under \$400,000. There are two abutters do not foresee huge problems. He will probably file next week with MA Housing.

Meeting Dates:

The next meeting will be October 20, 2004 at 7:15 a.m. at the Millennium School, Conference Room A.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.